532 that more than 58,000 copies of The Letter with a Chicken Feather have been sold.

E. Dance

535 China proper does not have any distinctive form of dancing, although yang-ko is sometimes considered native to China. Yang-ko is a combination of signing and dancing, derived from the song pattern of peasants who sing in groups antiphonically when working in the rice-fields. The dance steps revolve around a basic pattern, that is, two steps forward and one step back, which resembles the movements of the peasants as they work in the fields. In village festivals, yang-ko is sometimes performed, but it became truly popular only after the reform of literature and art in 1942, when the Communists used the dance to propagate new ideas in Shensi, and later in North China. It was brought to different parts of China in time to greet the advancing People's Liberation Army. The opera The White-haired Girl was based on singing and dancing forms of the yang-ko; and a the first stage of land reform this opera was utilized by the Communist cadres in many different parts of China to stir up class struggles in villages. The vogue of yang-ko in East China now seems to be over. The sophisticated cadres seem to prefer the new opera to yang-ko, and Western forms of social dancing to yang-ko steps.

The Chinese Communists have always fostered any art form that would assist their revolution. In 1950, Hsien Hsing-hai's Production

535 Cantata (Sheng-ch'an Ta-ho-ch'ang) was transformed into an operatic spectacle. The new song-and-dance version is divided into four scenes, celebrating the times of spring cultivation, seeding, harvest, and prosperity, to portray the rural working people's enthusiasm for production and their prosperity as a result of the Communist "liberation." [25]

535 563 The minority groups in the Southwest have many forms of folk dances. During the war with Japan and in the postwar years, folk dances such as the Drinking Party of the Chia-jung (Chia-jung Chiu-hui) became popular among student groups in all parts of China. The Cultural Corps (Wen-kung t'uan) of the Central Institute of Nationalities at Peking has been visiting the minority communities in Southwest China and has adapted some of the dances of the minority peoples for performance in Peking, in other Chinese cities, and abroad. Among those performed are the "Flute Dance" (a courtship dance) and "Wedding Dance" of the Miao people, "Happy Sun" (a tap dance) and "Good Harvest" (a traditional dance around a family cooking stove) of the Tibetans in Western Szechwan and Northern Yunnan, "Please Stay, You Guests from Afar" of the Yi people, and "Peacock Dance" of the Tai (Thai) people. [26]

535 The Central Dance Corps at Peking, sponsored by the government, recently gave a "Lion

25. People's Pictorial, August 1950.

26. Ibid., July 1954.

535 Dance," which is an adaptation of a traditional festival stunt performed in North China during the lunar New Year season.[27] Another dance, "Tea and Butterflies," has also been widely publicized; it is concerned with tea-gathering maidens in Western Fukien.[28] The purpose of these dances is "to beautify the working spirit" and to set a pattern to be developed by dance corps elsewhere in China.

The Central Experimental Opera Institute at Peking has also given instruction in ballet, and there are many aspiring ballerinas. Interest in ballet is unprecedented in China and is clearly the result of the popularity of ballet in Russia.[29]

The activities associated with dance are organized and directed by the government. There is the All-China Association of Dancers, a subdivision of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Workers,[30] with headquarters in Peking. Tai Ai-lien, a well-known professional dancer, heads the association. She has dedicated herself to the incorporation of folk life, especially that of the minority peoples, into her dances. Her training, however, is Western.

F. Music

533 Appreciation of Western classical music has been revived in accordance with the principle of "accepting the culture of the world." The

27. Ibid., March 1954.
28. Ibid., April 1954.
29. Ibid., May 1954.
30. The All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles was changed to the Federation of Literary and Art Workers in September 1953.